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Dear Mikayla,

We are pleased to give our final report on your novel “The Most Berkley Game.” We loved reading your book and found it very captivating. Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to edit it and give our feedback.

The focus of this manuscript is how to effectively use and create a concrete and significant setting. There are areas of the manuscript we feel could be improved by including the following things: adding more specific and meaningful description, having an active setting, and showing readers aspects of characters through setting rather than telling readers about them. Our recommendations came after careful deliberation, discussion, and extensive research through novels of writing techniques and novels that you mentioned you admired.

Again, thank you for giving us this opportunity. We hope that our comments will help as you come closer to your goal of publication.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Sincerely,

Abe, Kristin, & Melissa

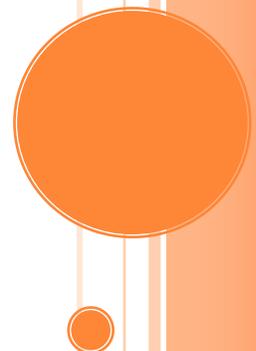


TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables and Figures	2
Abstract.....	3
Introduction	4
Creating a Realistic Setting	
What Do The Experts Say?	5
Successful Examples of Setting in Published Works	6
What We See in The Most Berkley Game	6
How to Implement a Realistic Setting into The Most Berkley Game.....	10
How This Will Improve Your Manuscript:	17
How Setting Affects Plot	
What Do The Experts Say?	17
Successful Examples in Published Works	18
What We See in The Most Berkley Game	19
How to Implement in The Most Berkley Game	21
How This Will Improve Your Manuscript	23
The Effects of Setting on Characterization	
What Do The Experts Say?	24
Successful Examples in Published Works	25
What We See in The Most Berkley Game	27
How to Implement Description and Setting in <i>The Most Berkley Game</i>	29
How This Will Improve Your Manuscript	32
In Conclusion	33

LIST OF TABLES AND IMAGES

Character Room Images.....	15
Location Description.....	20
Setting Building.....	23
Significant Character Objects.....	31

ABSTRACT

The focus of this manuscript is how to effectively use and create a concrete and significant setting. There are areas of the manuscript we feel could be improved by including the following things: adding more specific and meaningful description, having an active setting, and showing readers aspects of characters through setting rather than telling readers about them. Our setting recommendations have been split into three parts: creating a realistic setting, making an active setting, and the effects of description and setting on characterization. Each section is subdivided into four parts: what the experts say, successful examples of the topic in published books, what we see in your manuscript, and how we would advise changing the manuscript to fit the criteria we have just talked about; after which we explain what result this will give the manuscript.

THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING US TO TAKE A LOOK THROUGH YOUR MANUSCRIPT OF THE MOST BERKLEY GAME.

We enjoyed working with you on this manuscript so it can become an even greater work of fiction. We hope our skills of analysis are able to help you as you work further.

We really enjoyed your strong sense of voice in your writing. The clever chapter titles and the unique personality of your writing made reading a fun experience. We also felt you chose a fresh storyline that differed from the other books in the genre. Your characters had complete arcs where you can tell they grew into new people because of what happened in your novel.

For this content edit, we've decided to focus our analysis on your treatment of setting and description. We learned much through the manuscript about the lives of Berkley Adams and the Northside Twins, but we don't learn much about this city they've grown up in. Not only isn't that, the places your story is set often lacks significant description.

Caren Gussoff, a faculty member of the *Gotham Writer's Workshop*, has said, "In addition to grounding the reader in a physical place and time, setting can actually enhance the emotional landscape of a piece, affecting the atmosphere and mood" (157). Often it is said that the characters make the story, but if the characters are to emulate real people then they must be products of where they grew up.

There are three specific ways that setting can positively affect the quality of your manuscript:

1. Adding more specific and meaningful description.
2. Having an active setting to inform the reader of the thematic importance within the story.
3. Showing aspects of character personality through setting.

We read several craft books to gain the necessary information for this topic: *Description* by Monica Wood, *Setting and Writing the Short Story* by Jack Bickham, and *How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy* by Orson Scott Card. We also referenced professionally published books such as Rainbow Rowell's *Fangirl*, Mark Zusak's *The Book Thief*, and Maggie Stiefvater's *The Scorpio Races*. Inside this report, we've provided examples of successful description from these books with recommendations on how to apply those skills into your manuscript.

CREATING A REALISTIC SETTING

WHAT DO THE EXPERTS SAY?

Jack M. Bickham, author of the craft book entitled *Setting*, said “When you choose setting, you had better choose it wisely and well, because the very choice defines – and circumscribes – your story’s possibilities” (2). The setting is critical to the feel of the book because it affects the atmosphere surrounding the plot and characters.

What makes a story convincing to the reader is the setting. One mistake in a setting fact can make the entire book lose its credibility, and ultimately lose the reader interest (Bickham 20). Readers want to read about stories that are believable, no matter what the genre.

Bickham stated that a convincing setting also gives:

- Intensification of reader involvement
- Enhancement of story unity
- Tightening of plot structure and/or intensification of suspense
- Motivation of explanation of character
- Clarification of theme
- Excitement of writer’s own imagination (Bickham 3)

Readers need to feel grounded as they read in order to grasp what is going on. In fact, two completely different scenes can sometimes only be linked by setting. For example, a couple that is in love cuddling on a bench, and two men who are plotting to kill someone, may seem completely different stories, but when we know that they are in the same park we suddenly feel that they are connected.

Therefore, “The physical setting can provide a unifying background scenery” and should be used to do so as much as possible, especially in a story that is told from more than one viewpoint (Bickham 4).

Orson Scott Card stated in his book *How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy*, that a convincing setting is much like “water is to a plant – it’s the life of the story, and yet you have to keep it in balance” (88).

Both Card and Bickham explained the importance of giving setting details in little chunks at a time, not all at once, to make the setting feel more real and to keep the reader engaged.

SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES OF SETTING IN PUBLISHED WORKS

In *The Book Thief*, by Mark Zusak, setting is an essential element to the story, so much so that the story could not happen in any other setting. Liesel would not be in her predicament if she did not live in Nazi Germany with poor foster parents.

In the very first line of chapter two, Zusak gives us setting: “First up is something white” (6). He is talking about the snow, and only a few lines down he further explains what the area looks like so the reader can grasp the picture in their mind.

“It felt as though the whole globe was dressed in snow. Like it had pulled it on, the way you pull on a sweater. Nest to the train line, foot-prints were sunken to their shins. Trees wore blankets of ice” (Zusak 6).

Not only does Zusak give the reader a clear picture with concrete details on setting, but he also gives it to show he is able to describe the same thing in different ways. Repetition plants the image in our minds.

This scene from the book is a perfect example to demonstrate what Bickham speaks on regarding repetition of setting. He said “repetition of exactly the same sense impressions makes a story dull and predictable...if you need to repeatedly mention the frigid weather for example, find a different way to refer to it each time” (Bickham 12-13). Ways in which Zusak referred to the cold were mostly related to feeling, such as a sweater or the trees wearing blankets of ice, but we can visualize at least one different image in each sentence that builds the scenery in a subtle way.

WHAT WE SEE IN THE MOST BERKLEY GAME

In order to give the reader the foundation they need to feel grounded in the story, the setting of Virginia and the setting of each character’s home must be evident throughout. The following is a great example of how you used setting to describe the chaotic situation of their life and also bring the reader into a high school atmosphere.

“(Berkley) let herself be pulled through the crowd. Ina led her, pushing people when needed, through the halls and into the cafeteria. Berkeley stared longingly at the breakfast foods but said nothing as Ina tugged her out the cafeteria’s rear doors, out into the courtyard” (11).

Pushing through the crowded hallways is realistic to a high school, making the reader remember their own school experiences and therefore relate to the characters.

The very beginning of the story is crucial for establishing setting. Bickham, author of *Setting*, said “You can never have too much factual information on hand about your setting” (23). In *The Most Berkley Game*, the beginning began with a vague reference as to where Berkley was and what was going on around her.

“Berkley turned away from the front door as it shut. She could hear her dad’s boots rattle the landing outside, their wide steps thick and weary. She closed her eyes. How long had he said? Seven months? She took a breath and, shuddering, wandered into her bedroom. The apartment was quiet, and she pressed into the silence.

Her phone vibrated against her thigh. She slipped her fingers over the rectangle.

“Hello?” she muttered as she slumped onto the bed” (1).

Since this is the very beginning of the story, the reader needs to know immediately where and when this story is taking place. There are several lines in this passage that do not give the detail the reader is craving. For instance, “dad’s boots rattle the landing outside” brings up the question of where is outside and where is inside for her?

Also, “How long had he said? Seven months?” is not specific. Seven months could be anything: seven months until she has to move, seven months until her birthday, seven months until her graduation speech, or on the reverse side, it has been seven months since her mom died, or it has been seven months since she had last seen him.

Specific, concrete details ground a reader and make them feel comfortable as they read. You never want to make your reader confused. The beginning of the story must immediately hook the reader by entering them into the world of the characters without confusion.

Another way to establish setting is by repeating images more than once. The following passage where Berkley gives the twins the envelope is relatively the first time that we are introduced to the twin’s world at school, and so we want the images used to be specific and concrete.

“Ben,” someone called.

Ben looked up, jumping slightly, as someone’s voice—not Travis’ voice—called his name. He couldn’t see anyone through the crowd. He didn’t get why the crowd was there, really, but they came, and he let them; Travis seemed to enjoy it, so why not?

“Ben!” the voice came again. It was almost as hard as Travis’ voice, but higher, and female.

The crowd disrupted. Ben swiveled in time with his brother and stared as a girl stumbled out from the group, hair in disarray, mouth clenched and eyes wide. He knitted his brows together and, as he heard Travis’ laugh begin, gave a matching chuckle. What the—

“Berkley,” she said. “I am Berkley Adams.”

Ben paused. He glanced her up and down. She wore their school uniform, a grumpy smirk, and something too intimate to place. Ben wanted to avert his eyes—there was something too present about her, too warm, or perhaps too hot—but he couldn’t look away.

Travis didn’t say anything. Ben waited, watching the girl. She was about their age. Maybe a year older? The only hint was the light sketching of lines under her eyes, from either study or hard work. A scholarship student, then, maybe? He glanced at her hands. They were balled into fists, but—Travis put a hand on his shoulder.

“You guys like games,” she said. The crowd had silenced itself, suddenly, for some reason. They watched her. “Well, I’ve got a new one for you.”

Ben and Travis straightened in excitement. It’d been a while since they’d found a game interesting enough to play. The last interesting one had been last year, with that love-letter girl, and that hadn’t lasted for long.

The girl stepped forward. The sun hit her cheekbones, and she wasn’t warm or intimate anymore; she was a knife.

“Here’s the game.” She pulled out a manila envelope. “Who am I?”

Ben met Travis’ grin with a slow one of his own. How dumb could this girl be? Going up against them—well, they’d just have to show her exactly how serious a gamer they were.

They gave a short, deep laugh. Ben leaned back against the fountain as Travis leaned forward.

“Sounds exciting,” Travis said. “Only one problem. You haven’t played our game yet. And we only play with winners.” He cocked his grin to the side.

The girl gave a shark’s smile. Ben and Travis stayed silent. They’d been approached by several girls, sure. Some tried to make conversation, others tried to invite them to activities or birthdays parties, some even tried to confess their love—it was a part of the high school experience, Ben had always assumed. It was mandatory that girls be attracted to them. But this girl—something here was different. She was angry. An angry that was as cold and immovable as the granite walls of Northside Collegiate.

“Let the games begin, then,” she hissed.

The twins stood. Travis said, “The rules are simple. You have to guess which one of us is Ben,”

“And which one of us is Travis,” Ben completed.

They gestured and the crowd stepped back. So far, they’d only played this game once in their time at Northside Collegiate.”
(28)

It is only at this last sentence that we know for certain that they must be at the school, but we are not sure at what part of the school. There are several mentions of crowds, but it is unclear as to who the crowds are, where they are, or what kind of atmosphere the crowd has before Berkley comes.

Having the school as one of the main settings requires that we give it accurate, concrete details from the beginning. This will establish familiarity with the reader as they reach this setting throughout the novel.

When used in the proper place, setting can also allow a scene to be more powerful. Meaning, adding background material before a crucial point elevates the moment because the reader is not confused as to how the character got to the scene. For example, Berkley abruptly discovers that she is being photographed without explanation of how she found out. This lack of background information inhibits the reader emotions.

Her messenger bag hit the floor. Ben and Travis glanced up. Berkley was at the door, standing in a pig costume, her face flushed and her eyelashes resting over her gaze like razors.

“You took pictures of me,” she said.

Ben straightened against the bottom of her bed. Travis continued messing with the mashed buttons of the remote. (76)

As readers we ask a lot of questions from this short passage: What door is she standing in? How did the twins get in her house? Are they in her room or her living room, or all they all the same thing?

Another example of this, only three pages later:

Berkley’s hand trembled over the smooth curvature of the mouse. Images popped up, each more horrifying than the last. The large logo spelling out the name of her game ‘Who is Berkley Adams’ scrolled around the top, large and funny and arrogant. (79)

Not only is it hard to understand where she is earlier on, although we do figure out that she is in her room, we also do not understand how she discovered the website. The confusion over setting stops the reader from getting emotionally involved in the drama.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT A REALISTIC SETTING INTO THE MOST BERKLEY GAME

Giving sufficient detail establishes a realistic setting. There is no limit to how much detail you can add, and the more detail you add, the more coherent the manuscript will be. The first thing you need to do is research. Bickham says you “never assume you know something if you haven’t checked it out” (21).

Even if you have lived there, your view of a certain place may be sheltered or skewed in certain areas. Research everything! Research the weather. Research plants and animals. Many readers feel bad for reading fiction unless they know they are educating themselves; “the reader may also derive an additional sense of involvement and satisfaction if he is given, as part of the setting, factual data which fascinates him and makes him feel he is learning something” (Bickham 4).

However, there is a technique to adding setting details. Bickham, along with most authors, believes that setting details must be given in little pieces at a time. He said “Descriptions generally should be kept to a few words or a few lines at any given spot. Sensory descriptions should be sprinkled throughout the story, rather than ‘dumped’ in great gobs. Handled this way, descriptive passages won’t slow the story for long, and the reader will be reminded again and again – in short passages – how the story setting feels” (Bickham 8-9).

The first passage of your book that we looked at, the beginning scene, is a very important scene to establish setting because the reader must become hooked into the story. If the reader is confused as to where and when the story is taking place, he or she will become disinterested and may not continue to read.

The beginning passage of the book had many vague details. If you add small bits of information to give the reader a sense of what is going on, they will be captivated and continue to be captivated as more information is given to them in each sentence. We rewrote the beginning passage with a few short setting details to give you an idea of how easy it is to work setting into your manuscript. The added information is underlined.

Berkley turned away from the front door of her apartment as it shut. She could hear her dad's boots rattle the landing outside, their wide steps thick and weary as he slammed the taxi door and headed towards the airport. She closed her eyes. How long had he said he would be gone for work this time? Seven months? She took a breath and, shuddering, wandered down the short hallway into her bedroom. The apartment was quiet, and she pressed into the silence alone.

Her phone vibrated in her jean pocket against her thigh. She slipped her fingers over the rectangle.

"Hello?" she muttered as she slumped onto the *cold* bed of her blue room. (1).

Adding a few small details helps the reader significantly in their comprehension of the story, even in just the few opening paragraphs.

As mentioned earlier, another way to establish setting is by repeating images more than once. In the second passage we pulled from your manuscript, the twins and Berkley speak for the first time. This is not only important because it sets up the problem the twins have to figure out for the rest of the book, but this is also a scenery that is mentioned more than once in the novel. Therefore, the images need to be specific and concrete.

We have gone through the passage and underlined all of the descriptions that talk about the setting:

"Ben," someone called.

Ben looked up, jumping slightly, as someone's voice—not Travis' voice—called his name. He couldn't see anyone through the crowd. He didn't get why the crowd was there, really, but they came, and he let them; Travis seemed to enjoy it, so why not?

“Ben!” the voice came again. It was almost as hard as Travis’ voice, but higher, and female.

The crowd disrupted. Ben swiveled in time with his brother and stared as a girl stumbled out from the group, hair in disarray, mouth clenched and eyes wide. He knitted his brows together and, as he heard Travis’ laugh begin, gave a matching chuckle. What the—

“Berkley,” she said. “I am Berkley Adams.”

Ben paused. He glanced her up and down. She wore their school uniform, a grumpy smirk, and something too intimate to place. Ben wanted to avert his eyes—there was something too present about her, too warm, or perhaps too hot—but he couldn’t look away.

Travis didn’t say anything. Ben waited, watching the girl. She was about their age. Maybe a year older? The only hint was the light sketching of lines under her eyes, from either study or hard work. A scholarship student, then, maybe? He glanced at her hands. They were balled into fists, but—Travis put a hand on his shoulder.

“You guys like games,” she said. The crowd had silenced itself, suddenly, for some reason. They watched her. “Well, I’ve got a new one for you.”

Ben and Travis straightened in excitement. It’d been a while since they’d found a game interesting enough to play. The last interesting one had been last year, with that love-letter girl, and that hadn’t lasted for long.

The girl stepped forward. The sun hit her cheekbones, and she wasn’t warm or intimate anymore; she was a knife.

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The girl gave a shark's smile. Ben and Travis stayed silent. They'd been approached by several girls, sure. Some tried to make conversation, others tried to invite them to activities or birthdays parties, some even tried to confess their love—it was a part of the high school experience, Ben had always assumed. It was mandatory that girls be attracted to them. But this girl—something here was different. She was angry. An angry that was as cold and immovable as the granite walls of Northside Collegiate.

“Let the games begin, then,” she hissed.

The twins stood. Travis said, “The rules are simple. You have to guess which one of us is Ben,”

“And which one of us is Travis,” Ben completed.

They gestured and the crowd stepped back. So far, they'd only played this game once in their time at Northside Collegiate.”
(28)

In this passage, there are six references to a crowd. As readers, we do not learn anything about the crowd that would give us a hint as to where they are. Is it a crowd of girls? Is it all of the popular kids in the school? Is it random people pushing through the hallway?

Also, we do not know where the twins are. After we read the whole passage we figured out that they must be at the school, but at what part of the school? Inside or outside? A crowded area usually means a confined space, like a hallway, so the reader may think that these boys are inside the school. However, when you mention that the sun hits Berkley's cheeks, we question where the sun is coming from, if it is coming from a window or if they are outside.

The twins are also by a fountain, but there are no clear details as to what kind of fountain it is. If it was a drinking fountain it would be more evident that the conversation is being held inside the school; however, if it is a garden fountain then it is most likely a conversation being held outside. The smallest addition of details can create an immense improvement in visualizing the scene.

As you go through your manuscript, make sure to add setting details that not only are dribbled into the script to keep the reader's attention, but also add details that are significant to the story's comprehension. The fountain can be a significant detail, but it needs more explanation in order for the reader to understand why it is significant. As your review your manuscript, watch for images that are repeated and

see if they are a) drizzled effectively throughout the book and b) have a significant meaning to the story.

Setting helps establish the picture in the reader's mind. Therefore, the setting must be descriptive enough to give the reader an accurate picture of what the situation is. In the passage when Berkley discovers that the twins are taking pictures of her, we were confused as to how she found out, why the twins were in her house, and also why she was in a pig costume. The descriptive build up to this heated moment was insufficient, and therefore left us lost.

Each reader pictures things differently in his or her mind, and although this does not always matter, in regards to physical places it often is significantly important. From the passage on page 76 that was mentioned earlier, there are a few details about the setting that the reader is given. For example, "Her messenger bag hit the *floor*" immediately tells the reader that a girl is dropping her bag inside a building somewhere, because if it was outside it would say ground or a more specific detail such as grass or dirt.

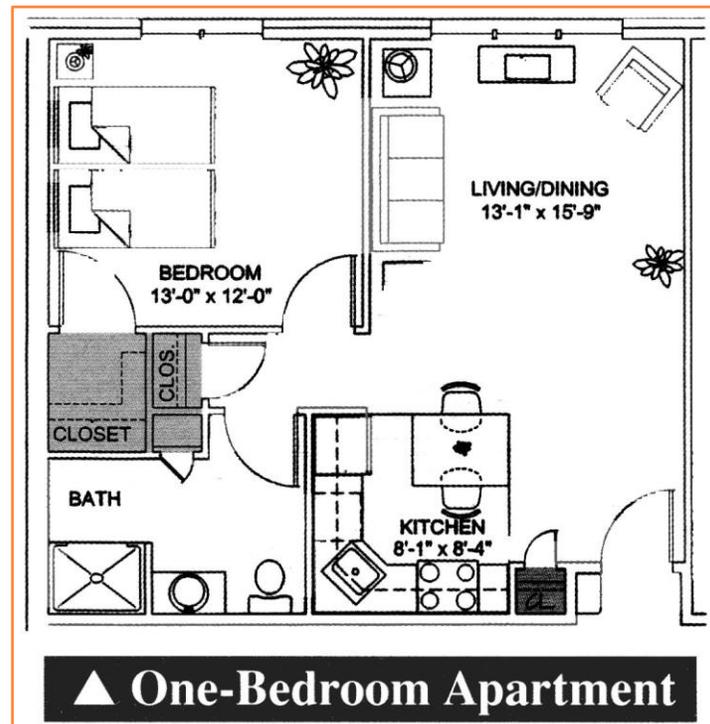
Then, "Ben and Travis glanced up. Berkley was at the *door*" tells the reader that Ben and Travis are present, and were looking down at something, but now are looking at the girl, who we now know is Berkeley, and she is standing at a door from the inside. After this we gather more details about Berkley as we find out she is in a pig costume and she is very angry. Then we find out that Ben is at the "*bottom of her bed*" and Travis is "messing with the mashed buttons of the *remote*", which we can assume is a TV remote, although it is not specified.

The only details that the reader is given about setting are the words in italics: floor, door, bottom of her bed, and remote. We also gather that Ben, Travis, and Berkley are all present. This does not give us enough detail to create a picture in our mind. Readers want to be directed as they read so they feel confident that the story is realistic and could actually happen. In order for you to understand what kind of apartment we are envisioning from these details, we have found a picture for members of the group that demonstrates the image in our mind.

For one group member, this image portrays the apartment from Berkley's point of view. Her bedroom is on the right door so she can see Ben at her bed, and the living room with the TV is on the left door so she can see Travis flipping through channels.



A second group member envisioned the apartment to look very different. Here is a bird's eye view of what was in their mind:



In order to make this setting more real and specific, you must add the correct details. Bickham stated that “According to psychological research findings – we know that person’s sight impressions of a given setting come into consciousness in a specific order... Spatial dimension is often noted first...the source of light is usually noted next or may be noticed simultaneously with dimension....the dominant color of a setting... texture...contrasting shades of color” (Bickham 9-10).

With this knowledge, and also keeping in mind that we must be true to Berkley's character since it is her house, and to the larger setting of a Virginia apartment, we wrote an example of what you could do to help make this passage easier to visualize and therefore help build the tension that is occurring between characters. Our added information is underlined.

Berkley's messenger bag hit the floor of her cramped apartment hallway as she walked through the door. She was still in her pig costume from work. The only light came from the flickering red and blue TV images, and Ben and Travis glanced up from the brown, microfiber couch. Berkley's face flushed. Her eyelashes rested over her gaze like razors.

"You took pictures of me," she said.

We first used spatial dimension (cramped apartment hallway), then source of light (flickering red and blue TV images), dominant color of setting (cool colors: The only light came from the flickering...TV, blue, brown), and texture (microfiber) to adhere to Bickham's research on sight impressions, and aid the reader in creating the images of the story. In being true to Berkley's character, which we have come to understand as someone who is not as rich as most of the other people that she knows, we chose to make it a microfiber couch instead of, say, a leather couch, because microfiber is a cheaper fabric. This is a telling setting detail, or a significant detail, because it gives us insight into her lifestyle.

As you master this practice of sight impressions, you will also want to dribble in other details about the setting that involve more of the five senses. These senses also have an order of most effectiveness, although it does not have to be written in this way. Bickham stated that the hierarchy of senses is "generally, in most used to least: sight, hearing, smell, tactile, and then taste (9-11). We took the same rewrite from before and added aspects of the five senses to enhance its credibility:

Berkley's messenger bag hit the floor of her cramped apartment hallway with a thud when she walked through the door. The smell of buttery popcorn filled the air, and she stood in shock, still in her styrofoam pig costume from work. The only light came from the flickering red and blue TV images. Ben and Travis glanced up from the brown, microfiber couch crunching popcorn kernels in their mouths. Berkley's face flushed. Her eyelashes rested over her gaze like razors.

"You took pictures of me," she said.

Use this same technique for when Berkley finds the website. It would be really interesting if there was more expansion on how she got on the web instead of starting off with the shock. That way the reader can move with the story and become shocked with

her. The setting needs to convey her emotions and should be a key factor in helping us understand what is going on and how she feels about it.

HOW THIS WILL IMPROVE YOUR MANUSCRIPT:

Adding information in little chunks at a time will help the story create visuals for the reader without slowing down the action. Using repetitive images will help build up a scene in the reader's mind, and the more significant the details, the better the outcome will be for the manuscript. Also, the technique of using sight impressions first, and then adding the rest of the five senses, gives the setting a realistic feel that the reader will embrace. Using this technique throughout the story will greatly help your reader connect the images in their mind, understand your characters, understand what it would be like to live in Virginia from her financial viewpoint, and bond with the characters as they learn about them through the setting.

MAKING AN ACTIVE SETTING

WHAT DO THE EXPERTS SAY?

Setting that adds to the plot of a novel tends to be invisible to the untrained eye. Most beginning writers aren't completely aware of how setting affects all aspects of the story because the author's efforts may be so carefully integrated into the story. Caren Gussoff of the Gotham Writer's Workshop faculty says, "Look at effective stories and you'll find the setting is so deeply combined with the characters and the action that it's almost unnoticeable. Like a master woodworker whose joinery is invisible, the writer has embedded the setting into the story" (151).

An active setting contributes to the mood or message of the story. A passive setting is like a painting you hang on the wall solely because there's an empty space. An active setting is a painting done in hand mixed oils by your late great grandfather whom you adore. Such a painting introduces important context to the history of the story. Setting can also be a painting hiding a safe which holds the gold revolver you introduced three chapters ago, where the setting sets the stage for later events through use of tone or imagery. Look for ways that setting can "play some kind of role" in the story to make the details worth mentioning. (155)

Another aspect of setting that affects the plot is the atmosphere created by the setting. Gussoff says, "In addition to grounding the reader in a physical place

and time, setting can actually enhance the emotional landscape of a piece, affecting the atmosphere and mood” (157).

Use words that drip rainwater or scald the tongue to help the reader understand the dramatic importance of a scene in comparison to the scene before it by having them be noticeably different. Typically the more information about setting and imagery you cover, the more your reader will soak in the world you’re creating.

SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES IN PUBLISHED WORKS

Active setting gives a sense of atmosphere to a story that implies a character’s mood or increases tension in the story. According to Bickham in *Setting*, “If your story’s plot is ‘working’, your characters should be under some pressure – both in terms of story time and emotion – virtually throughout” (Bickham 23). In Rainbow Rowell’s *Fangirl*, Cath has just started college and is walking to her first class of the year. She’s here alone, cut off from her twin sister and dreading interacting with actual humans. In this segment setting reflects Cath’s removal from her situation:

“Walking to class, Cath couldn’t shake the feeling that she was pretending to be a college student in a coming-of-age movie. The setting was perfect—rolling green lawns, brick buildings, kids everywhere with backpacks. Cath shifted her bag uncomfortably on her back. *Look at me—I’m a stock photo of a college student.*” (Rowell, p. 15)

The eerie perfection and Cath’s unease help keep the dramatic tension alive. This kind of atmosphere encourages the reader to look forward to what’s happening next as they wait for the moment the tension will be cut. On the very next page of *Fangirl*, Cath thinks back on an exchange with her sister, Wren, which relieves the tension of the scene, only to dive right back in to Cath’s discomfort with her new environment:

“Cath had read all three of her [professor’s] books(decline and desolation in rural America) over the summer.

‘Why are you reading that?’ Wren had asked when she noticed.

‘What?’

‘Something without a dragon or a elf on the cover.’

‘I’m branching out.’

‘Shh,’ Wren said, covering the ears on the movie poster above her bed. ‘Baz will hear you.’

‘Baz is secure in our relationship,’ Cath had said, smiling despite herself.

Thinking about Wren made Cath reach for her phone.

Wren had probably gone out last night.

It had sounded like the whole campus was up partying. Cath felt under siege in her empty dorm room. Shouting. Laughing. Music. All of it coming from every direction. Wren wouldn’t have been able to resist the noise.” (Rowell, p 16-17)

The shift in tone from a place of happiness to one of discomfort shows a broad range of emotions for the story to feed off of. If the whole book remained in that gloomy self-conscious tone, the reader would become disinterested in the plot without waiting to see what would happen next.

WHAT WE SEE IN THE MOST BERKLEY GAME

The emotional tone of your writing is very mature and soulful. It lends well to dramatic scenes in your manuscript, such as when Ben discovers Berkley sitting in a gazebo. In that same scene, you also use lots of description to set the wet, rainy mood that prepares the reader for the scene.

“Ben wandered toward the noise. A part of him shivered hesitantly; his side was cold without his brother pressing on him, laughing or breathing jokes into his right ear. Still, he ventured past the line of pruned spruce trees. He tilted his head and spotted a gazebo not far off, and a small, curled being inside it.

He tried to slink off, but the grass was soggy, and as he moved, his loafers made a light suction cup pop.

The head of brown hair swung up, and, through the swaying of loose and lazy waves, Ben spotted Berkley’s puffy eyes. He froze. Her mouth was red and sucking hard, slippery breaths. Her hands pressed back her curls. Should he run? She blinked and found him through her wet lashes; they stared at each other.

Ben cleared his throat. The noise seemed to jolt Berkley out of something, and she set to wiping her nose and eyes. Her cheeks glistened around the dark smudges at the corner of her eyes.” (pg. 80)

Because the setting is yet to be fully developed in your novel, so far it feels like your characters are living in a vacuum, a place where there is no real definition of the area. Several times it's mentioned that the story takes place in Virginia but there is no real connection to the location besides saying its name, which is mentioned a grand total of five times in the entire manuscript. Right now, *The Most Berkely Game* could take place in any town in America. Why don't we know more about it?

On page 46 of your manuscript you wrote, "Their front lawn pooled with the sky's jumping tears. Ah, Virginia. Ben leaned his head against the glass and tried to tell apart the raindrops as they thundered down. A white streak flooded the sky. He waited for more."

From what we see here, we can assume that Virginia is known for its rainy weather, but as we reviewed your manuscript we counted only four literal mentions of rain and yet ten mentions of the sun explicitly shining. Readers who have never been to Virginia don't know what the typical weather is like. Weather has a large effect on the personality of the setting. Thankfully, since you are from Virginia, you have a lot of familiarity with the area and could use your knowledge to add more to the setting.

Below is a chart that takes a look at the various places you visit in your story along with the mood of the area and how many plot events happen there. The first time you visit a scene sets the tone of that area for the whole novel, and if you give every setting the same feeling, they'll bleed together in the reader's mind.

In places where many events take place, the tone should be more varied with the situation to avoid everything bleeding together.

Scenes marked with a * are from Berkley's point of view, and scenes marked with a ^ are from Ben's.

Location	Descriptions of the Setting	Important Event + Page Number
Berkley's House	Quiet, stillness, empty, silence	* Berkley and Ina hang out 2, * Dad comes home 22, ^ The twins stop for breakfast 58, ^ They watch Inception 62, ^ The twins ask Berkley to Prom 65, ^ Berkley confronts the Twins for the pictures 77, ^ The twins crash in on Berkley and Ina 117, * Ina and Berkley make up 128
Northside house	Large, stuffy	* Berkley scopes the twin's house 22, ^ Mom orders sushi 49, ^ Ben wanders to the kitchen 50, ^ Ben reconnects with mom 102,
Northside	Cold, loud,	* Berkley and Ina go to school to give Travis the letter

Collegiate		10, * The Fiasco at Debate 15, ^ Berkley challenges the twins 26,
The Pool	Slick, chlorine steam, moist	* Introduce Mallory 12, ^ The twins block the door 34, ^ The first clue (essay question) 38, * Berkley and Mallory at the pool 82, ^ The twins enlist Mallory 93, ^ Mallory helps them spy 96
Gazebo	Cold, soggy	^ Ben confronts a crying Berkley 80
Cemetery	Beautiful	^ The Twins spy on Berkley with her mom 54
Goober's Drive Thru	N/A	^ The Twins confront Berkley at work 40

This is not a complete list of all the locations in *The Most Berkley Game*, but the chart reveals how little the environment is described. Most of the descriptions affect only the characters, leaving the backdrop plain and sterile.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT IN THE MOST BERKLEY GAME

Rewrite passages for atmosphere. Just by adding simple description the reader can get a better feel of the location, and if you take advantage of the viewpoint characters current mood, you could charge the atmosphere of the setting with the tension of the moment.

For instance, you could take the scene on page 40, when the Twins show up at Goober's Drive Thru while Berkley is working, and include descriptions that expressed how mundane and tired the restaurant is to set the mood for the new energy brought in by the Twins. Another choice is to describe the restaurant as fun and fast paced, only to have it slow to a crawl when Berkley sees them in the doorway. The second is a good choice because, as Joshua Allen teaches, a setting that is ironic to the character's setting is more emotionally compelling. An example of this would be having a beautiful sunny day at the time of your best friend's funeral, as opposed to having it stormy and raining on the day of the funeral. In this example the setting does not agree with the emotion of the character, and therefore the injustice and pain of the character is heightened because it gives the feeling that no one cares.

To illustrate the second option, here we've rewritten that scene in Goober's. Some research led to some confusion of what Berkley's job is in the drive thru. She's a greeter, but that's more typical of a sit down restaurant. She also busses tables, which is not something a greeter would do no matter where they were employed. This sample rewrite will have Berkley as a cashier, which still allows her to bus the Twin's table during the slow periods of the day.

[Working at Goober's Drive Thru on Sunday afternoons were easier for Berkley than every other day of the week. Sunlight](#)

poured through the large glass window on the other side of the cashier counter, Berkley's fate for the night, and created abstract ripples on the yellow and white linoleum floor. Despite being on her feet for three hours already, she still moved around the behind the counter with a spring in her step. They had hit a lull in the day so she could relax a bit by scrubbing up old ketchup stains from the empty table tops. She reached down under the countertop to pull out a spritz bottle full of cleaner and a rag.

The bell rang. Berkley glanced up, ready with her smile, before she flattened it.

"Welcome to Goober's Drive-Thru," she said, gripping the edge of the counter. Ben and Travis were heading over at their own pace through the front door. "Can I get you anything?"

"A slab of you—" Travis grinned.

"—topped with cherries?" Ben's mouth fell short at a wide smile.

"We don't serve cherries." They had to come bother her here, didn't they? She glanced at the few indoor seats. Three of five were open, so she couldn't tell them to come back later, but—she spotted her manager from the drive thru window giving her the eye. She turned back to the twins. "But we offer strawberry milkshakes and sundaes." (20)

Rewriting some of your scenes as shown above will help the reader to orient themselves and to understand some idea to your character's emotional landscape, not just the landscape of the town.

We also suggest nailing down where your novel is set in more detail than you would ever reveal to the reader. Because you have chosen to set this story in Virginia, give enough details about this community in Virginia that we would know exactly what it is like to live there, even if we have never been. Giving details about the weather, the air of the people (nice, pushy, stuck-up, poor, etc.), the houses, the school, the popular diners, and so forth, will create the details we need to know Virginia the way that Berkley knows it.

Right now we know your story is set in the state of Virginia, but that's all the information we have. We know there is a cemetery, a drive thru, a cafe, a prep school, perhaps a park with a gazebo. From page 42, we know that the Northside family owns Goober's Drive Thru and that they founded both the prep school and the entire town.

What we don't know about your setting is how many square miles it takes up, how big the population is, or how long it's been around for. All of these will affect the setting of your story and, while your reader may not know any of these details, adding more than enough details will help ground your narrative in with the world and help to fill the empty spaces. Consider what your characters would do for entertainment or shop for clothes. Here we have a prep school where wealthy families send their kids to learn. How has the affluent area affected the town?

Here's a sample fact sheet to give you a starting point. You can fill in the rest as you feel is needed or branch off.

Town Name:	Lynelle, Virginia, named after the founder's wife, Lynelle Northside
Founded:	1906
County:	Chesterfield County
Population:	31, 047
Land Area:	7.4 Square Miles
Water Area:	0.6 Square Miles
Places to eat:	Goober's Drive Thru, Pigsby Cafe, _____, etc.
Number of movie theaters in area:	
Median Income per Household:	
Number of Starbucks in area:	

HOW THIS WILL IMPROVE YOUR MANUSCRIPT

Cementing the broad as well as the minute details of your setting will help give the reader a firmer sense of where they are in the story and why each location matters. If the scene could be played out in another other setting, or worse on a white backdrop, then your setting will not be powerful enough to sell your story to the reader. The tension in each scene is enhanced by the tone of the setting, and by keeping notice of what tone words you use you can create the right mood for the moment.

THE EFFECTS OF DESCRIPTION AND SETTING ON CHARACTERIZATION

WHAT DO THE EXPERTS SAY?

Descriptions and settings should be used in such a way it can create a sense of place, character, contain integral meaning and show things about characters without saying it directly

Joshua Allen, a creative writing teacher at Brigham Young University Idaho, it is important to show and not tell in writing. If there are going to be details in a story, they should be both concrete and significant. A well written setting can show the reader what a character is like without directly saying it.

Monica Wood in *Description* says that both descriptions and settings should have a memorable quality that hints at the story's meaning. Telling the readers that the sunset is beautiful or that a town was built in 1723 is fine; but if the sunset turns out to be the last thing the character sees in the living world, and 1723 is the birthdate of the character's earliest known ancestor, then setting takes on added weight.

Wood also says setting can be used for a sense of place, but also as a means of character development. She explains that "When you take care to make a description of setting integral to the story—that is, if it sets a tone or mood, foreshadows future events, or suggests the characters' motives or desires—then you will be able to keep your readers engaged" (Wood 134).

A sense of place is vital if you want your reader to enjoy the story, but it is not enough to simply create a setting that a reader can enter. Jack M. Bickham in his book *Writing the Short Story A Hands-On Program*, talks about the many values of setting. Although he is talking about writing short stories, his advice also applies to longer pieces of writing and novels. Bickham lists three questions people should ask themselves in relation to setting. One of his questions is: "Are my story characters truly 'children of the story environment,' or have I thoughtlessly stuck the wrong kind of story people in a given setting—or, conversely, have I created a setting in which *these* story people would not normally be found?" (Bickham 63).

Essentially there are two basic techniques that we will focus on in this section to help you improve your manuscript:

- Setting details should be concrete and significant
- Setting should give a sense of place and develop characterization

SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES IN PUBLISHED WORKS

Maggie Stiefvater in the first two pages of chapter one of *The Scorpio Races* gives the reader a great description of the life of one of her main characters Puck using setting and concrete and significant details.

People say my brothers would be lost without me, but really, I'd be lost without them.

Usually if you ask someone on the island where they come from, they say something like *Round about Skarmouth* or *Back side of Thisby, the hard side* or *Stone's throw from Tholla*. But not me. I remember being small, clutching my father's lined hand, and some wind-beaten old farmer who looked like he'd been dug out of the sod asking, "Where you from girl?" I answered, in a voice too loud for my tiny freckled self, "The Connolly House." He said, "What's that now?" And I replied back, "Where we Connollys live. Because I am one." And then—I am still a bit embarrassed about this part of it, as it speaks to a black part of my character—I added, "And you're not."

That's just the way things are. There are the Connollys, and then there's the rest of the world—though the rest of the world, when you live on Thisby, is not very large. Before last fall, it was always this: me, my younger brother, Finn, my older brother, Gabe, and our parents. We were a pretty quiet family altogether. Finn was always putting things together, and taking them back apart and saving any spare parts in a box under his bed. Gabe wasn't a huge conversationalist, either. Six year older than me, he saved his energy for growing; he was six feet tall by the age of thirteen. Our dad played the tin whistle, when he was home, and our mother performed the miracle of the loaves and the fishes every evening, though I didn't realize what a miracle it was until she wasn't around.

It wasn't that we were unfriendly with the rest of the island. We were just friendlier with ourselves. Being a Connolly came first. That was the only rule. You could hurt all the feeling you liked, so long as you weren't hurting the feelings of a Connolly.

It's midway through October now. Like all autumn days on the island, it begins cold but warms and gains color as the sun rises. I get a currycomb and a brush and I knock the dust out of Dove's dun hide until my fingers warm up. By the time I saddle her up, she's clean and I'm grubby. She is my mare and my best friend, and I keep waiting for something bad to happen to her, because I love her too much.

As I pull up her girth, Dove pushes her nose into my side, just shy of a nip, and pulls her head quickly away; she loves me, too. I can't ride long; soon I'll have to come back and help Finn make cookies for the local shops. I also paint teapots for the tourists, and since the races are coming up, I have more than enough orders backed up. After the races, there'll be no more visitors from the mainland until spring. The ocean is just too uncertain a thing when it's cold. Gabe will be out all day, working at the Skarmouth Hotel, getting the rooms ready for the race spectators. When you're an orphan on Thisby, it's hard work making ends meet. (Stiefvater 7-8)

This scene teaches the reader so much about Puck. She is an orphan with two brothers that comes from a tight, proud, hardworking, poor family. Puck is not afraid of getting dirty and likes to ride her horse Dove. The box of collected junk under her brother's bed, her father's tin whistle, mother's ability to make more food appear out of so little. These kinds of details and descriptions create a picture of Puck's family and not just any random family.

Stiefvater has two main characters Sean and Puck. She includes important places for both Sean and Puck as evident in the following list that contains a few of the setting in the story.

- The stables (Sean)
- the track (Sean)
- The bakery/store gift shop (Puck)
- The Small home (Puck)
- The small apartment about the stables (Sean)
- The beach (both)
- The festival (both)
- The butchers shop (both)

Wood in *Description* gives an excellent example of how setting can reveal attributes of a character. The following two examples show a setting that is not used to its full potential and the second is a rewrite of that setting showing how an effective use of setting can reveal attributes of a character:

Version One: Belle turned off Lucas street to where the gravel path wound around the pond. The sky was blue, the day warm, the ground solid under her feet. She walked down the path to where the reeds began, and looked across the water to where some water lilies floated over the brackish surface. A family of ducks

made their way through the lilies, quacking softly. A wind disturbed the water, and she closed her eyes. She loved this place; she could get away from her family here. It was peaceful and calm.

Version Two: Belle held to the path until it crooked around the south end of the pond. She stopped for a few moments simple to listen, then followed the trail she had matted into the grass over the past two weeks. It wound through the reeds and ended at the edge of the water. She sat down, pressing her hands into the spongy earth, listening hard, dissecting the confusion of the sound: an oriole’s mournful piping, the rustle of grass, the white noise of the insects, the slap of muskrats diving from the banks, the intimate quavering of mallards stressing through the snags of water lily. By now she could identify each note of the trees, whined the morning commute on Lucas Street, high and insistent and inescapable. Farther still, she could (she imagined) hear the clash of words—ugly, staccato, incomprehensible—in the cluttered kitchen she had come her to escape.

August of wind moved the water, making the world reflected there—tree, cloud, sky—seem to explode, then calmly reassemble itself. She looked to the far bank. A blot of yellow moved through the brushy tangle of the pond’s far side, a warbler looking for nesting material. It was the time of year for making homes.

Version one introduces any old character looking at any old pond. Version two introduces a troubled woman coming to a unique place that she has chosen for its restorative qualities (Wood 138).

“The focus on sound suggests that Belle can dissect the “confusion of sound” in the pond in a way she cannot dissect the “incomprehensible” sounds in the “cluttered kitchen she had come here to escape.” The pond is not simply fill-in or background or atmosphere: Belle’s presence there is purposeful and gives us information about her (Wood 139).

WHAT WE SEE IN THE MOST BERKLEY GAME

This scene in your book effectively uses setting to show Berkley’s character. She can carry on a conversation with Ben while still being aware of what is going on around her. However, this scene happens near the end of the book. It may be beneficial to put more scenes like this closer to the beginning of the book as well as throughout.

He nodded. Travis had just finished arranging the whole thing last night. Berkley’s shoulders dropped as she let out an audible sigh.

“Ms. Adams,” the teacher called.

Ben snapped to attention. Berkley’s chair screeched.

The man was tall and lean, but with a sallow face. Smoker, probably. “Can you tell us the answer, then?”

“- $\pi/4$,” Berkley said, without pause.

The teacher stared at her. Adjusted his tie. Smiled with lifted, dusty eyebrows. “Well done. Exactly. Now, if you could all take stab at the problem and see if you can reach Ms. Adams’ answer as well...” (92)

There is a scene similar to this one that shows what the twins are capable of. The debate meeting. The following scenes show the twins. In the first one they are playing basketball and in the second they are at the fountain at school. We underlined details and parts of setting that are both concrete and significant.

“Are we still playing?” Ben asked.

Travis didn’t answer. His hands coaxed their basketball into a steady rhythm, then caught it unawares and thrust it away, arching into the air. The orange dropped through the hoop with a satisfying swish.

“Of course,” Travis said. He waited as the ball’s leaps grew smaller and smaller as they carried it back towards them. “We accepted her invitation so we could break her.” He stooped and took the ball in hand. “This whole thing was pointless if we stop now.” He tossed the ball again. It missed.

No points, Ben tallied. They never counted officially, but Ben liked watching the numbers stack in his head. The mind was his favorite game of Tetris.

Travis rolled the ball to him. He scooped it up, nestling it in the crook of his arm, and measured the court with his eyes. The wind was blowing. He moved into position and angled himself against the wind.

“We need more information to win,” Ben called out. He threw the ball. The wind ushered it through the hoop and let it drop with a solid, rubber ringing. “If we keep our distance like we have been, we’ll never get more info.” He turned.

Travis’ fists balanced on his hips. The ball didn’t roll towards him. He set off towards it with a huff. (Rivera 89,90)

Fountain scene:

They were handsome, Berkley had to admit. They both had strong shoulders and lean builds, like basketball players, though as far as she knew they refused to participate in any group activity or organization besides Debate. Even then, they sat in the corner near the back, whispering, muttering, or laughing with each other, like the rest of the world didn't exist. Now, the two were doing much the same thing, playing the Cup Game at top speed, their eyes connected and measuring each other. They looked like a mirror, Berkley thought briefly, their movements in perfect, speedy synch, their smiles both tipping up more on identical sides. Even the parts in their messy, dark brown hair moved out in the same clockwise circle. Their cups sped up, slowed down, and went at perfect pace. Neither one of them fell out of synch with the other. (Rivera 11)

The first scene shows that the twins play basketball. While it does have some concrete details, there are no real significant ones besides the general idea that the boys play basketball. The fountain scene has some details that are both concrete and significant. The reader can see that the twins keep to themselves even in group settings and that they try to be seen as clones. These scenes and others can be improved if instead of telling these things the description and setting can show these details.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT DESCRIPTION AND SETTING IN *THE MOST BERKLEY GAME*

Wood says setting should be used for a sense of a place where the reader can see the story taking place, but also as a means of character development. Look at the following passage taken from your manuscript and see how much the setting and detail create a sense of place and develop the character for the reader.

According to Allen it is important to show and not tell in writing. If there are going to be details in a story, they should be both concrete and significant.

This scene shows the boys playing basketball that we showed earlier. It is in an ambiguous setting that is only used for the story to take place. The setting needs to be more than a backdrop. It needs to play an active role in developing the characters. We went through this passage and added information to show how the setting can serve as a means of character development with concrete and significant details like Wood and Allen advise.

“Are we still playing?” Ben asked.

Travis didn’t answer. He liked the feel of his Jordan’s on his feet when he played. Ben was always more of a LeBron fan, evident by his red LeBron’s. Many times they had debated who of the two was a better player, LeBron or Jordan. Travis’ hands coaxed their basketball into a steady rhythm, then caught it unawares and thrust it away, arching into the air. The orange dropped through the hoop with a satisfying swish.

“Of course,” Travis said. He waited as the ball’s leaps grew smaller and smaller as they carried it back towards them. “We accepted her invitation so we could break her,” he said while completing a reverse layup. He always felt like a pro when he did that. “This whole thing was pointless if we stop now.” He tried a left jay hook. It missed.

No points, Ben tallied. They never counted officially, but Ben liked watching the numbers stack in his head. The mind was his favorite game of Tetris.

Travis rolled the ball to him. He scooped it up, nestling it in the crook of his arm, and measured the court with his eyes. The wind was blowing. He moved into position and angled himself against the wind.

“We need more information to win,” Ben called out. He shot the ball in a fadeaway. The wind ushered it through the hoop and let it drop with a solid, rubber ringing. “If we keep our distance like we have been, we’ll never get more info.” He turned.

Travis’ fists balanced on his hips. The ball didn’t roll towards him. He set off towards it with a huff.

With this new passage we have showed that Travis and Ben’s expensive shoes show that they come from money. The added detail that they are different shoes show that the boys have differences that people would notice if they really got to know the boys. Something that the boys want people to notice, but will not admit. The added in basketball jargon shows that the boys really like basketball because they can perform several types of shots. It is not simply something that they mess around with in their free time, but something that they have worked to become good at. Details like these make characters fuller and more lifelike.

The following table will help build your characters. List 20 concrete and significant objects that help the reader get to know each character. We have listed some objects earlier to give you some examples of what we are talking about, but we

want you to list things that you feel would describe your characters. In the book, you show that space, sports, hacking, and going to an Ivy League school are important to the characters. Keep those things in mind and list objects that can build off of interests you have already shown the character possess when picking objects that describe them.

Significant Character Objects		
Berkley	Travis	Ben
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.
6.	6.	6.
7.	7.	7.
8.	8.	8.
9.	9.	9.
10.	10.	10.
11.	11.	11.
12.	12.	12.
13.	13.	13.
14.	14.	14.
15.	15.	15.
16.	16.	16.
17.	17.	17.
18.	18.	18.
19.	19.	19.
20.	20.	20.

There are some important settings that if developed well, will show a reader a lot about your characters. The following scenes should reveal significant information about each character through concrete details.

- Berkley’s visit to her mom’s grave
- Berkley’s apartment/room
- the scenes at the fountain
- The twins room
- Berkley’s work places

Bickham asks, “Are my story characters truly ‘children of the story environment,’ or have I thoughtlessly stuck the wrong kind of story people in a given setting—or, conversely, have I created a setting in which *these* story people would not normally be found?”

After reading this passage, the audience is left to wonder what places the twins normally spend their time since it is evident they do not usually spend time in fast-food joints. Most of the settings in the story relate to and tell the reader about Berkley. Only a couple of them tell about Ben and Travis. Remember that if you want to have two main characters, the story has to be balanced between Berkley and Ben. For this reason, we also recommend that you add in more scenes that relate to the twins to help build them as characters. Here are a couple ideas:

- A high end sports club or gym
- A visit to a library (So Travis can continue to improve his hacking skills)
- More of their house

HOW THIS WILL IMPROVE YOUR MANUSCRIPT

By following the advice of experts and following our instructions, your book will seem more like someone's actual experience that others can take part in. It will contain characters that have developed personality through details and setting. To do a quick recap of our recommendations, here are some of the ways your manuscript will be improved by making the changes that we are suggesting.

- Setting that helps build characterization
- A setting that matches characters
- Not only a detailed setting, but a useful one
- A story whose setting is showing rather than an author that is telling

IN CONCLUSION

This report outlines just a few of the paths you can take when revising your manuscript for description and setting. Our recommendations have been designed to give the reader a fuller sense of the story beyond what the characters do or say. These principles can be used to improve this manuscript as well as any other works you will produce in the future.

- The three specific ways we outlined about setting and description were:
- Adding more specific and meaningful description.
- Having an active setting to inform the reader of the thematic importance within the story.
- Showing aspects of character personality through setting.

We hope that our recommendations will help you understand what you would like to do with your manuscript as you come closer to publication. We wish you the best of luck on all of your future writing endeavors! You have an intelligent sense of characters and storytelling and it has been a privilege to work with you. Once again, thank you for allowing us to work through your manuscript *The Most Berkley Game*.

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